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Carter Administration:

Leaking Credibility

It's a situation that owes as much to *Mutiny on the Bounty* as the Marx brothers: President Carter cannot trust his closest advisers. So he is having the FBI investigate high-level leaks and has ordered affidavits from officials such as former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and CIA director Stansfield Turner. What has outraged the President is unauthorized disclosures about several potentially controversial foreign policy matters.

The irony is that the President's own watchdog may be one of the most avid leakers. According to Hodding Carter, former state department spokesman, the National Security Council is responsible for many of the foreign policy news leaks which Brzezinski blames on others. At the same time, Brzezinski's office re-

portedly is behind efforts to control leaks in other departments.

Having left the State Department two weeks ago, Carter says the confusion and double-dealing are a result of White House distrust of the press. As he explained it, "They think reporters are clods and animals and that you simply feed them. There are some people who are major leakers themselves who think the only way reporters get a story is through a leak."

The picture that emerges from the leaks and the President's own desperate measures to enforce loyalty is of an administration that feels it must rule by manipulation and intimidation. The unfortunate result is that the government is busily springing leaks with one hand and plugging them with the other, while the ship of state founders for lack of real direction.